

business briefs

Loot, 3598 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, 283-3800



(Loot in Lafayette): Betsey Hecht in the store Photo Sophie Braccini

of marvelous home accessories with a broad range of prices, from very affordable gifts to stunning place setting and flowers. "We have felt very welcomed in Lafayette," says Hecht, "we had worked for years in Piedmont and Oakland but the rise of crime there made it impossible to stay. Here the synergy is good and our business is doing very well." Morgan teaches flower arranging in the store as well, the next class will be on September 22nd, call the store for details.

For the Sassy Shoe Lover- Sacsies in Lafayette

Sheena Shastri lives in Orinda and is passionate about shoes. In January, she launched a product that she created called Sacsies. Sacsies are fashionable shoe totes designed for women's shoes, for travel and closet storage. They are unique in design and functional: they have a cylinder shape which cradles the shoes, an easy closure seal allowing adequate ventilation and the quilted lining creates added cushion to pad the shoes; the viewing window allows for an easy selection of shoes in your closet since you can see which pair is in each bag.

From the three Chambers of Commerce

Tri-Chamber meeting

Stratford at Countrywood invited the Chambers of Commerce for a joint meeting on September 10th. The event was well attended and very lively, a perfect venue to talk about synergies and make new business connections.

Keith Miller, President of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce and Edy Schwartz, President of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce thanked the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce for organizing the Tri-Chamber events.

Jay Lifson extended an invitation to Moraga and Orinda Chamber members to join all Lafayette Chamber events in the future.



Tri Chamber Mixer

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

- September 20th and 21st: Let's all go to the Arts and Wine Festival!
- Entrepreneurs Club on September 18th starting at 8:30 a.m. The Club is on the road again, going to "Clocks Etc.", 971 Moraga Rd in Lafayette.
- Business Issues Committee on Thursday, September 25th at 8 a.m. in the Chamber Conference Room.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

- September 27th: Let's all go to the Pear Festival!
- September Chamber meeting Friday, September 26 8 a.m. at Fireside Room in the Hacienda with speaker Rhonda Chaikin, who will share with the Chamber ideas for "Greening Your Business Environment"

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

- September 30th: Let's all go to the Restaurant Tour!
- Orinda Chamber Mixer at the de Laveaga Estate on September 25th - 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Parking is very limited on the property. The Chamber will be shuttling guests to the site. Catch the shuttles in front of the Orinda Library and Chamber office. The Orinda Chamber proposes to its members a unique visit with one of the most emblematic family of Orinda. The de Laveagas have continuously occupied the property where their ancestor built their house in 1888. Thanks to Marty Stewart De Laveaga and her family chamber members will be able to walk back in time and see her great grandparent's house.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com or call our office at 925-377-0977.

Former Employee Fights Back

By Lee Borrowman and Cathy Tyson

Long K. Tran, a former employee of Judy's Nail Salon in Moraga, has recently filed a report with the Moraga Police Department (MPD) against Judy Yang of Judy's Nail Salon. Derick Luu, who identified himself as Tran's spokesman, said Tran is claiming that Yang falsely accused him of stealing from her business, and that Tran

quit his job at the salon after he was not paid some of the wages owed to him. Luu believes that Yang accused Tran of theft in an attempt to discredit him (as reported in our issue dated July 9, 2008; at that time Mr. Tran could not be located for comment).

"I believe he stole from me; products and customers. My busi-

ness is now damaged," Yang said last week. However, Moraga Police have confirmed that the investigation into the alleged thefts from Judy's Nail Salon has been dropped. Officer Will Davis said, "Currently there is no theft investigation; based on her statements, Judy couldn't substantiate any missing products or cash."

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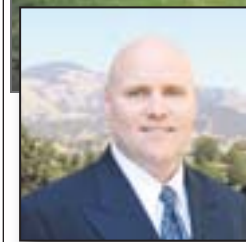


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Chartreuse – A Woman's Endeavor To Save Our Skins

By Sophie Braccini



Lavande Spa and Boutique Manager presents Chartreuse beauty products

Photo Sophie Braccini

When she became a mother, Laurie Walter of Lafayette started paying more attention to the labels of the care products she was buying for her child and her home. Then one day she read "Not Just a Pretty Face; The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry," by Stacy Malkan, and learned that what appears on these product labels is not strictly regulated the way the Food and Drug Administration regulates food, and some ingredients are left off the label. Not content to ignore what she couldn't see, Walter decided to research products thoroughly and ended up deciding to create her own when she discovered that even some well-marketed environmentally friendly products could endanger her family.

"I now have the responsibility for the health and well-being of my three sons," says Walter, who admits to worrying as well about what kind of future her children will have on our over-taxed planet. A Tufts graduate and former business consultant, she felt she had the knowledge and motivation to make a difference for consumers.

When she started to research products that wouldn't harm her family, Walter discovered that the term "fragrance" on an ingredient

list is a proprietary element, the components of which may be kept secret by manufacturers.

"When Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) researchers tested thirty-one fragrance products, they found that more than half the products contained ingredients listed under the EPA's Toxic Substance Control Act. Since perfume can enter the body through the skin or by inhalation, many of these chemicals are readily absorbed and accumulate in the body's fatty tissue," explains Walter.

Another ingredient often found in cosmetics is DEA (diethanolamine), a chemical that is used as a wetting agent in shampoos, lotions, creams and other cosmetics. DEA is used widely because it provides a rich lather in shampoos and keeps a favorable consistency in lotions and creams. DEA by itself is not harmful but while sitting on store shelves or in your cabinet at home, DEA can react with other ingredients in the cosmetic formula to form an extremely potent carcinogen called nitrosodiethanolamine (NDEA). NDEA is readily absorbed through the skin and has been linked with stomach, esophagus, liver and bladder cancers.

"I am not in the business of tearing down other companies,"

says Walter, "but I do try to get people to read beyond the marketing fluff and packaging. I try to give them the tools to read product labels for themselves." And with her own line of products on the market, with ingredients that are fully disclosed, Walter feels confident they won't be disappointed.

The name "Chartreuse" comes from a Crayola crayon shade of yellow-green that was created in 1972. Associated with a spunky pink, it creates the fun and crisp image of Walter's products and web site.

"Many organic items have a dull image," says the young entrepreneur, "I wanted to create an attractive and elegant packaging for these quality goods." Thus the company's motto: "Be Distinctively Green."

Walter goes beyond packaging. Her operation is contained within her garage at this time, and ranges from enhancing bulk natural soaps with essential oils, to creating completely new products like the "Sassy Shopping Bag" that she designed when she couldn't find what she wanted on the market. The "eco-chic" purse contains six grocery size foldable shopping bags, and room to put the keys and wallet: no more excuses for forgetting those green bags at home or in the car. Her line of products also includes household cleaners, organic body and facial care products, recycled gift-wrap and notebooks.

The way Walter distributes her products is in line with her sustainable vision of life. She has started to build a network of Consultants who sell the products on their own schedules, growing as their network expands. In addition, she is working with local retailers and has an agreement with Lavande Spa and Boutique on Mount Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette.

More information can be found on the web site www.ChartreuseProducts.com

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